

something of the greatest importance to communicate to him; this letter remained unnoticed like the first. Unable to account for this strange treatment I again repaired to the Pavilion de More, and requested the Abbe Fleuriel to explain to me if he could the cause of his master's silence. "Sir," said he, "I received your two letters, and laid them before the Count; I cannot tell why he has not sent you an answer; but *Monsieur le Comte* is so much engaged. . . . *Monsieur le Comte* is so overwhelmed with business that —" — "*Monsieur le Comte* may, perhaps, repent of it. Good-morning, sir!"

I thus had personal experience of the truth of what I had often heard respecting M. de Blacas. That favorite, who succeeded Comte d'Avary, enjoyed the full confidence of the King, and concentrated the sovereign power in his own cabinet. The only means of transmitting any communication to Louis XVIII. was to get it addressed to M. de Blacas by one of his most intimate friends.

Convinced as I was of the danger that threatened France, and unable to break through the blockade which M. de Blacas had formed round the person of the King, I determined to write to M. de Talleyrand at Vienna,<sup>1</sup> and acquaint him with the communications that had been made to me. M. de Talleyrand corresponded directly with the King, and I doubt not that my information at length reached the ears of his Majesty. But when Louis XVIII. was informed of what was to happen it was too late to avert the danger.

<sup>1</sup> Talleyrand had on this occasion but little of that foresight generally attributed to him, and he seems to have not dreamt of the approaching catastrophe. When informed by Metternich of the departure of Napoleon from Elba the following conversation took place. Talleyrand—"Do you know where Napoleon is going?" Metternich—"The despatch does not say anything about it." Talleyrand—"He will embark (disembark?) somewhere on the coast of Italy, and throw himself into Switzerland." Metternich—"He will go straight to Paris" (*Metternich*, vol. i. p. 255). This is not quite in agreement with Talleyrand's own account (*Talleyrand's Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 71), where he says he learnt the news first from a note of Prince Metternich, "to whom I replied that I saw from the date that Bonaparte's escape was connected with Murat's asking Austria to permit his troops to pass through her provinces." But, in the spirit of the answer attributed to him by Metternich, he informs the King that he "cannot believe that he (Napoleon) would dare to make any attempt upon our southern provinces" (vol. ii. p. 72). At p. 108 of the same volume he tells Jau-court that "We have no reason to fear; our cause is safe," and, "I think this last dreadful attempt of Bonaparte's will not last long."